

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** PCS for HB 369 Pub. Rec./Prearrest Diversion Programs

**SPONSOR(S):** Criminal Justice Subcommittee

**TIED BILLS:** HB 367 **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 450

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
Orig. Comm.: Criminal Justice Subcommittee		Brummett	White

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 367 (2017), which is tied to this bill, creates s. 901.40, F.S., to encourage local communities and public or private educational institutions to implement prearrest diversion programs. The bill provides a framework for a model Adult Civil Citation Program that allows a law enforcement officer, at the officer's sole discretion, to issue a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program notice to an adult who commits a qualifying misdemeanor offense and satisfies other requirements.

The program provides a participating adult with intervention and behavior services while requiring them to complete community service hours and pay restitution. If the adult successfully completes the prearrest diversion program, an arrest record may not be associated with the offense.

Under current Florida law, there is no public records exemption for the records associated with a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program.

This bill amends s. 904.10, F.S., created in HB 367 (2017) to create a public records exemption for the personal identifying information of an adult who participates in a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program.

The bill provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.

The bill provides that it shall take effect on the same date that HB 367 or similar legislation takes effect.

The bill may have a minimal fiscal impact on the state and local governments. Please see "FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT," *infra*.

**Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a newly created or expanded public records or public meetings exemption. The bill creates a public records exemption for a civil citation, documentation of a prearrest diversion program, and any reports or documents concerning a civil citation or a prearrest diversion program, and therefore requires a two-thirds vote for final passage.**

### FULL ANALYSIS

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: pcs0369.CRJ

DATE: 2/8/2017

## I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

#### **Public Records**

##### *Florida Constitution*

Article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution sets forth the state's public policy regarding access to government records. The section guarantees every person a right to inspect or copy any public record of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

The Legislature, however, may provide by general law for the exemption of records from the requirements of article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution provided the exemption passes by two-thirds vote of each chamber, states with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption (public necessity statement), and is no broader than necessary to meet its public purpose.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Florida Statutes*

The Florida Statutes also address the public policy regarding access to government records. Section 119.07(1), F.S., guarantees every person a right to inspect and copy any state, county, or municipal record, unless the record is exempt.

The Open Government Sunset Review Act<sup>2</sup> provides that a public record exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose and the "Legislature finds that the purpose is sufficiently compelling to override the strong public policy of open government and cannot be accomplished without the exemption."<sup>3</sup> However, the exemption may be no broader than is necessary to meet one of the following purposes:

- Allow the state or its political subdivisions to effectively and efficiently administer a governmental program, which administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption;
- Protect sensitive personal information that, if released, would be defamatory or would jeopardize an individual's safety; however, only the identity of an individual may be exempted under this provision; or
- Protect trade or business secrets.<sup>4</sup>

The Open Government Sunset Review Act requires the automatic repeal of a public records exemption on October 2nd of the fifth year after its creation or substantial amendment, unless the Legislature reenacts the exemption.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Prearrest Diversion Programs**

HB 367 (2017), which is tied to this bill, creates s. 901.40, F.S., to encourage local communities and public or private educational institutions to implement prearrest diversion programs. The bill provides a framework for a model Adult Civil Citation Program (ACCP) that allows a law enforcement officer, at the officer's sole discretion, to issue a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program notice to an adult who:

- Commits a qualifying misdemeanor offense (as determined by the program);
- Does not contest that he or she committed the offense; and
- Has not previously been arrested or previously received an adult civil citation or similar notice, unless the terms of the program allow otherwise.

The ACCP provides an adult with appropriate assessment, intervention, education, and behavioral health care services, while requiring them to complete community service hours and pay restitution. If the adult successfully completes the ACCP, an arrest record may not be associated with the offense.

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<sup>1</sup> FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

<sup>2</sup> s. 119.15, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> s. 119.15(6)(b), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> s. 119.15(3), F.S.

## Public Records Exemptions for Certain Criminal Records

### *Effect of a Criminal History Record*

Research estimates that as many as one in three adults in the United States have a criminal record. The Federal Bureau of Investigation maintains a database of records compiled when a suspected offender is arrested and fingerprinted by local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies.<sup>6</sup> Private consumer reporting agencies offer background reports for sale to employers, but often times utilize databases that may include outdated court records.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, any contact with the criminal justice system, including arrests that do not lead to conviction, can have long-lasting effects on a person's employment, housing, education and other opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

### *Adult Criminal History Records*

A criminal history record includes the disposition of an arrest, whether it results in a conviction, acquittal, or dismissal of the charges before trial.<sup>9</sup> Generally, Florida law allows dissemination of criminal justice information<sup>10</sup> to the public. Section 943.053, F.S., provides that an adult's criminal history information<sup>11</sup> is available to criminal justice agencies for criminal justice purposes free of charge, and to persons in the private sector upon payment of a fee.<sup>12</sup> Adults seeking to prevent such disclosure may obtain a court order making criminal history records confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S., and article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution by petitioning for:

- Court-ordered sealing;<sup>13</sup> or
- Court-ordered expunction.<sup>14</sup>

### *Sealing of Criminal History Records*

To be eligible for the sealing of a criminal history record, an applicant must petition the court providing a sworn statement attesting that he or she:

- Has never been adjudicated guilty of a criminal offense or comparable ordinance violation;
- Has not been adjudicated guilty for any of the acts stemming from the arrest or alleged criminal activity to which the petition to seal pertains;
- Has never had a prior sealing or expunction of criminal history record; and
- Is otherwise eligible and does not have any other petition to seal or expunge pending before any court.<sup>15</sup>

If a criminal history record is ordered sealed by the court, it is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S., and article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution, and available only to:

- The person who is the subject of the record, or their attorney;
- Criminal justice agencies for criminal justice purposes;<sup>16</sup>
- Judges; and

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Friedman, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, *Just Facts: As Many Americans Have Criminal Records As College Diplomas*, <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/just-facts-many-americans-have-criminal-records-college-diplomas> (last visited Feb. 6, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> The result being that even some expunged arrests are reported to employers. Brendan Lynch, *Talk Poverty, Never Convicted, but Held Back by a Criminal Record*, <https://talkpoverty.org/2014/12/09/held-back-by-a-criminal-record/> (last visited Feb. 6, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Center, The Council of State Governments, *Clean Slate Clearinghouse*, <https://csgjusticecenter.org/cleanslate> (last visited Feb. 6, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Seal and Expunge Frequently Asked Questions*, [http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/cms/Seal-and-Expunge-Process/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx#Charges\\_dropped\\_dismissed](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/cms/Seal-and-Expunge-Process/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx#Charges_dropped_dismissed) (last visited Feb. 5, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> "Criminal Justice Information" means information on individuals collected or disseminated as a result of arrest, detention, or the initiation of a criminal proceeding by criminal justice agencies, including arrest record information, correctional and release information, criminal history record information, conviction record information, offender registration information, identification record information, and wanted persons record information." s. 943.045(12), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> "Criminal history information" means "information collected by criminal justice agencies on persons, which information consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, or other formal criminal charges and the disposition thereof. The term does not include identification information, such as biometric records, if the information does not indicate involvement of the person in the criminal justice system." s. 943.045(5), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> s. 943.053(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> s. 943.059, F.S.

<sup>14</sup> s. 943.0585, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> s. 943.059, F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Such purposes include conducting criminal history background check for firearms purchases and transfers. s. 943.059(4), F.S.

- Certain entities for licensing, access authorization, and employment purposes.<sup>17</sup>

An order sealing a criminal history record does not require that the record be destroyed and criminal justice agencies may continue to maintain the record. An adult, whose criminal history record has been sealed, may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrest covered by the sealed record, except in certain specific instances.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Expunction of Criminal History Records*

To be eligible for expunction, an applicant must petition the court providing a sworn statement that he or she:

- Has never been adjudicated guilty of a criminal offense or comparable ordinance violation;<sup>19</sup>
- Has not been adjudicated guilty for any of the acts stemming from the arrest or alleged criminal activity to which the petition to expunge pertains;
- Has not received a prior sealing or expunction of a criminal history record;<sup>20</sup> and
- Is otherwise eligible and does not have any other petition to expunge or seal before any court.<sup>21</sup>

He or she must also obtain a written statement of the state attorney or statewide prosecutor indicating that a charging document was not issued in the case, or the case was dismissed or nolle prossed, and did not result in a trial.<sup>22</sup>

If a court orders expunction, the criminal history record must be physically destroyed by any criminal justice agency having custody of the record, except that it must be retained by Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The record retained by FDLE is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S., and article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution, and is not available to any person or entity without a court order. When a criminal history record has been expunged, the subject of the record may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrests covered by the expunged record, except in certain specified circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Pre-Arrest Diversion Program Records*

Due to the prearrest nature of the programs, records held by a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program are created before any arrest occurs and, thus, do not become part of the criminal history record system. As such, there is no ability to seal or expunge a civil citation or prearrest diversion program record. Instead, such records are subject to public disclosure because there is no public records exemption applicable under current Florida law.

#### **Effect of the Bill**

The bill amends s. 904.10, F.S., as created by HB 367 (2017), to create a public records exemption related to adult civil citation and similar prearrest diversion programs. Under the exemption, the personal identifying information of an adult who participates in a civil citation or similar prearrest

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<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> The subject of the record may not deny the existence of the sealed record when they are seeking employment with a criminal justice agency; a defendant in a criminal prosecution; concurrently or subsequently petitions for either expunction or sealing; seeking admission to the Florida Bar; seeking certain employment or professional licenses; seeking appointment as a guardian; subject to a background check when attempting to purchase a firearm; or seeking a license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm. s. 943.059(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> A pardon does not have the effect of erasing guilt so that a conviction is treated as though it never occurred. A pardoned individual cannot satisfy the requirements for a certificate of eligibility for an expunction. *R.J.L. v. State*, 887 So. 2d 1268, 1281 (Fla. 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Unless expunction is sought of a criminal history record that was previously sealed for 10 years and the record is now otherwise eligible for expunction. s. 943.0585(1)(b)3., F.S.

<sup>21</sup> s. 943.0585(1), F.S.

<sup>22</sup> s. 943.0585(2), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> A person may not deny the existence of the expunged record when they are seeking employment with a criminal justice agency; a defendant in a criminal prosecution; concurrently or subsequently petitions for either expunction or sealing; seeking admission to the Florida Bar; seeking certain employment or professional licenses; or seeking appointment as a guardian. The existence of the expunged record is confidential, except that FDLE must disclose the record of expunction to these entities for their respective licensing, access authorization, or licensure decisions. s. 943.0585(4), F.S.

diversion program is exempt from the requirements of s. 119.07(1), F.S., and article I, s. 24(a) of the Florida Constitution.

The bill repeals the exemption on October 2, 2022, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

The bill provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.<sup>24</sup> It specifies that the Legislature finds that “[t]he goal of the such programs is to give a second chance to adults who commit misdemeanor offenses and allow them the opportunity to avoid having an arrest record.” As such, prearrest diversion program records must be exempt, as disclosure “would defeat the program’s goal of giving adults who commit misdemeanor offenses a means to avoid the negative consequences of an arrest and prosecution”, and “disclosure might negatively impact the effectiveness of the program.”

The bill provides that it takes effect on the same date that HB 367 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes law.

**B. SECTION DIRECTORY:**

Section 1. Amends s. 901.40, F.S., as created by HB 367 (2017), to provide a public records exemption for the personal identifying information of an adult who participates in a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program.

Section 2. Provides a public necessity statement.

Section 3. Provides an effective date for the same date that HB 367 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.

**II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues: The bill does not appear to have any impact on state revenues.
2. Expenditures: See Fiscal Comments.

**B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues: This bill does not appear to have any impact on local government revenues.
2. Expenditures: See Fiscal Comments.

**C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR: None.**

**D. FISCAL COMMENTS:** The bill could have a minimal impact on agencies because agency staff responsible for complying with public records requests may require training related to the creation of the public records exemption. In addition, agencies could incur costs associated with redacting the confidential and exempt information prior to releasing a record. The costs, however, would be absorbed by existing resources, as they are part of the day-to-day responsibilities of agencies.

**III. COMMENTS**

**A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:**

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<sup>24</sup> FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).  
**STORAGE NAME:** pcs0369.CRJ  
**DATE:** 2/8/2017

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision: The bill does not appear to: require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

Vote Requirement

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a newly created or newly expanded public records or public meetings exemption. The bill creates a public records exemption; therefore, it requires a two-thirds vote for final passage.

Public Necessity Statement

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a public necessity statement for a newly created or expanded public records or public meetings exemption. The bill creates a public records exemption; therefore, it includes a public necessity statement.

Breadth of Exemption

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a newly created public records or public meetings exemption to be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. The bill creates a limited public records exemption for the personal identifying information of an adult who participates in a civil citation or similar prearrest diversion program which does not appear to be in conflict with the constitutional requirement that the exemption be no broader than necessary to accomplish its purpose.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: The bill does not appear to create a need for rulemaking or rulemaking authority.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS: None.

**IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

N/A